

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **GOVERNOR MAPP PROPOSES TWO BILLS TO THE 31<sup>ST</sup> LEGISLATURE TO FUND THE HORACE CLARK BALL PARK AND PURCHASE EMERGENCY VEHICLES.**

**(August 14, 2015, St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands)** Governor Kenneth E Mapp today, transmitted two bills to the 31<sup>st</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands. One bill is to increase the spending authorization and expand the scope of Act 7453. The Governor is asking the Legislature for authorization to purchase vehicles, ambulances and equipment for the Virgin Islands Police Department, the Virgin Islands Fire Service, the Virgin Islands Department of Health, ceremonial vehicles for the Offices of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, equipment and coroner's transport vehicles for the Medical Examiner and vehicles, security and video surveillance equipment for the Bureau of Corrections

"Having adequate vehicles and equipment for our first responders and law enforcement agencies in the Territory is paramount to protecting the safety and welfare of our residents and visitors. For many years our first responders have valiantly done their duty with less than standard vehicles and equipment." Stated Governor Mapp in his correspondence to the Senate President.

"The Virgin Islands Police Department is operating with vehicles in and outside the terms of their Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Virgin Islands Fire Services is operating with substandard, non-functional and obsolete fire suppression vehicles. The Virgin Islands Department of Health is operating ambulances and emergency medical support vehicles that are substandard and obsolete, some dating back to 1999. The Territorial Medical Examiner has operated with a lack of adequate equipment, biological and pathological equipment and vehicles to properly transport, autopsy and examine human remains.

"As we increase our law enforcement efforts, the Medical Examiner's office must be equipped to provide the forensic pathology work as well as the forensic investigative skills necessary to ensure that we are providing competent assessment of evidence in the administration of justice. The misconception that the Medical Examiner's office simply transports deceased persons from a crime scene to the morgue is one that we must change in our community. The Medical Examiner's responsibility includes the processing of evidence to effectively assist law enforcement in solving crimes," Said Gov. Mapp. To that end, vehicles used to transport deceased individuals must and should be industry standard. In addition, we must provide resources for the Medical Examiner to upgrade forensic equipment within the lab.

Governor Mapp is also asking the Legislature for authorization to purchase ceremonial/ official vehicles for the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. “The Governor’s official vehicles were purchased back in 2005; they are in constant need of repair and are an embarrassment to the territory”, said Gov. Mapp. “During my inauguration on January 5<sup>th</sup>, my official vehicle collapsed at Emancipation Garden and I had to be transported to the next inaugural event via police transport. I suppose this was symbolic of the state of the government I was inheriting,” the Governor noted. “Currently the Lieutenant Governor travels via police vehicles because he has no functioning official vehicle,” stated the Governor.

The Bureau of Corrections (BOC) is in dire need of resources to build and improve security systems at its facilities. The (BOC) needs to upgrade its transportation fleet and to improve and install security and video surveillance systems the Golden Grove Correctional facility.

The second bill is to fund the repairs to the Horace Clark Ball Park on the west end of St. Croix. “This west end park has served as a place for the community to play softball and baseball with their families and friends. With the Paul E. Joseph Stadium and Terrence Martin Ballpark facilities under demolition and reconstruction, children and adults are in need of facilities in the town of Frederiksted,” said Gov. Mapp.

“The Commissioner of Sports, Parks & Recreation has completed an assessment of the ballpark and determined that there is a need to demolish and renovate certain areas of the park and the appropriation requested will accomplish this task. The Lt. Governor and I are committed to providing safe and up to date facilities for our youth. We thank Senator Kurt Vialet for making this recommendation and we agree with him by forwarding this proposal to the legislature.” Governor Mapp noted.

Governor Mapp requested that the 31st Legislature act on these measures swiftly and he is hopeful that the members of the Senate agree with the Administration’s attempts to provide resources for law enforcement, fire and medical emergency personnel, the medical examiner, the Bureau of Corrections and upgrading the Horace Clark Ball Park.

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